

VZCZCXR09799
PP RUEHBI RUEHCI
DE RUEHKT #0401/01 1011104
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 101104Z APR 08 ZDS ZDS ZDS
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8300
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2344
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 2020
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 4767
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 6731
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 5980
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6414
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0083
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 4115
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 3816
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000401

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV KDEM NP

SUBJECT: NEPAL: ELECTION SITREP TWO

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y
TO ADD SIPDIS CAPTION

Summary

¶1. (U) OVERALL, POLLING CONTINUED WITH SPORADIC (BUT NO MAJOR) INCIDENCES OF FRAUD OR VIOLENCE. SEVERAL OF OUR MISSION OBSERVERS HAVE REPORTED AS OF 1600 THAT 50-70% OF REGISTERED VOTERS HAD ALREADY TURNED OUT AT THE POLLING STATIONS THEY VISITED. NONETHELESS, CERTAIN ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION DESERVE MENTION AS STANDING OUT ABOVE OTHERS. ALL U.S. MISSION OBSERVER PERSONNEL ARE SAFE AND ACCOUNTED FOR.

ISOLATED ACTS OF VIOLENCE

¶2. (U) WHILE THE SITUATION HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY CALM THROUGHOUT THE DAY, CERTAIN EGREGIOUS EVENTS FROM THE DAY STAND OUT AS OF 1645. A US MISSION ELECTION OBSERVER REPORTED THAT ONE WOMAN WAS KILLED IN POTHYAHY VDC IN RAUTAHAT (SOUTH CENTRAL TERAI) AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN FIRING BETWEEN MAOIST CADRES AND THE TERAI MADESH LOKTANTRIK PARTY. ANOTHER US MISSION ELECTION OBSERVER REPORTED THAT TWO ELECTION STAFF HAD BEEN SHOT IN PARSA PATALI VDC IN THE SOUTHERN REGION OF THE TERAI BY AN UNIDENTIFIED GUNMAN. NEWS REPORTS STATE THAT ONE PERSON WAS KILLED AND TWO WERE INJURED IN A SHOOTING IN MOHOTTARI POLLING CENTER (LOCATED IN SOUTH CENTRAL NEPAL). ANOTHER NEWS REPORT INDICATED THAT IN RUKUM DISTRICT (IN THE CENTRAL WESTERN REGION OF NEPAL AND A MAOIST STRONGHOLD), 5 NEPALI CONGRESS CADRES WERE ABDUCTED BY YCL MEMBERS. NEPALI MEDIA REPORTED THAT A BOMB EXPLODED NEAR A BUS PARK IN BIRGUNJ AND ONE PERSON HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY INJURED. MAOIST YOUTH COMMUNIST LEAGUE (YCL) CAPTURED POLLS IN BHOJPUR, CHISAPANI, TWO LALITPUR CONSTITUENCIES (WHICH ARE PART OF GREATER KATHMANDU), SINDHUPALCHOWK, SUNARPANI, SARLAHI, AMONG OTHERS. AS OF 1400, THE KATHMANDU ELECTION COMMISSION CONFIRMED THAT POLLS

HAD BEEN DEFERRED IN 11 CENTERS DUE TO VIOLENCE OR VOTING IRREGULARITIES.

¶3. (U) THERE HAS BEEN AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT REPORTED TO UNMIN REGARDING THE ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE NC CANDIDATE LEELA KOIRALA IN JANAKPUR MUNICIPALITY. TWO PEOPLE ON A MOTORCYCLE FIRED AT HER VEHICLE WITH A PISTOL BUT THE SHOTS MISSED THE VEHICLE. THE POLICE ARE SEARCHING THE VICINITY; LEELA KOIRALA IS SAFE AND NO ONE WAS INJURED.

¶4. (U) IN THE DISTRICT OF SUNSARI, HOTLY CONTESTED BY NC MINISTER SUJATA KORIALA (DAUGHTER OF PRIME MINISTER KORIALA) AND MADESHI FORUM LEADER UPENDRA YADAV, NEPALI CONGRESS CONTACTS REPORTED THAT THE POLICE WERE PREVENTING A KEY ELECTORAL GROUP (MUSLIMS) FROM ACCESSING THE POLLS. SUJATA KORIALA HAS REPORTEDLY PULLED OUT OF THE ELECTION IN PROTEST AND ASKED FOR REPOLLING TO OCCUR IN THAT DISTRICT. THE MEDIA REPORTS THAT A NEPALI CONGRESS CANDIDATE, GUNGA DAS, HAD BEEN KILLED IN THAT SAME DISTRICT. ONE OF OUR MISSION OBSERVERS HAS REPORTED THAT THE APF (ARMED POLICE FORCE) HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED TO BHUTAHA IN THAT DISTRICT TO REACT TO MOB VIOLENCE.

¶5. (SBU) IN ADDITION TO REPORTS OF INCIDENCES ON ELECTION DAY, AN INITIAL UN REPORT ON THE APRIL 9 INCIDENT IN LAMAI (DANG DISTRICT) INDICATES THAT 8 MAOISTS ARE CONFIRMED DEAD, AND TWO OTHERS ARE IN CRITICAL CONDITION. THE DEATHS RESULTED FROM GUNFIRE BY ARMED POLICE FORCES (APF) WORKING ON A PROTECTIVE DETAIL FOR NEPALI CONGRESS LEADER KHUM BAHADUR KHADKA. NO WEAPONS WERE FOUND IN THE THREE MAOIST VEHICLES AND EYEWITNESSES REPORTED THE APF OPENED FIRE ON THE MAOISTS WITHOUT PROVOCATION. THERE WAS NO DAMAGE TO ANY OF KHADKA'S VEHICLES OR INJURIES TO HIS PARTY. KHADKA IS ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE KILLING OF TWO PEOPLE DURING THE 1999 ELECTIONS.

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y
TO ADD SIPDIS CAPTION

¶6. (U) POST MEDIA MONITORING OPERATION HAS NOTED NO MEDIA VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT AS OF 1600 HOURS LOCAL TIME. TV AND RADIO REPORTS OF VOTING IRREGULARITIES (POLL DEFERRAL, BOOTH CAPTURE) HAVE AUGMENTED OUR OBSERVER REPORTS. TALKING HEADS ARE FILLING AIR TIME WITH ROUTINE ACCOUNTS OF LEADERSHIP RANKS CASTING VOTES AND VIDEO FOOTAGE OF ROUTINE, ORDERLY VOTING. THE MEDIA CENTER OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION WILL HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT APPROXIMATELY 1800.

¶7. (U) THIRTY THREE U.S. MISSION PERSONNEL HAVE DEPLOYED AROUND THE KATHMANDU VALLEY AND ACROSS NEPAL TO MONITOR ELECTIONS ACTIVITY DURING THE INITIAL STAGES. ALL U.S. MISSION OBSERVER PERSONNEL ARE SAFE AND ACCOUNTED FOR.

POWELL